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The Mississippi valley in British politics. A study of the trade, land speculation, and experiments in imperialism culminating in the American revolution. By Clarence Walworth Alvord. In two volumes. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark company, 1917. 358 p.; 396 p. \$10.00)

The appearance of this work marks the close of a piece of research that has occupied the author's attention for a number of years past and that has resulted in the production of a very valuable series of publications. The general subject that has been worked out in its various aspects is the old French settlement in the Illinois country. The present work attempts something considerably more ambitious and decidedly more significant. The scope of the author's earlier studies has been widened so as to include the entire frontier of the English colonies as well as Nova Scotia, Quebec, and the great lakes region. The imperial aspects of this great west, with all its potentialities but half guessed by the generation responsible for the outcome, are admirably presented in the two volumes on the *Mississippi valley in British politics*. Thanks to the author's painstaking research we are enabled to get a clear picture of the British government in the process of evolving a colonial policy during the decade preceding the American revolution. The picture presented by the actual governmental conditions in England and by the petty cabinet jealousies and the ignoble squabbles for place and preferment forms a striking background for the course of events in America.

Mr. Alvord has been completely successful in maintaining his thesis that the Mississippi valley at a critical period in our history was again and again a determining factor in British politics. The part played by William Pitt, George III, Lord North, Shelburne, Hillsborough, Dartmouth, and a host of lesser lights is carefully dissected out of the tangle of intrigue centering at the court and we are able to pass judgment critically upon their respective contributions. Here, too, we meet among the large group of Americans the familiar figures of Washington, Sir William Johnson, Franklin, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry, playing their characteristic parts in the colonial struggle. The separate topics dealt with have more than once been presented in detail by various writers but nowhere have they been combined in a single treatment so as to bring out their relative importance in the whole scheme of colonial policy. The story of our early western land grants is somewhat familiar but here it is presented as a factor in precipitating certain cabinet crises and as an ever present element in the intrigues at the court of George III. The rather obscure schemes for land speculation have a new meaning when viewed as a part of an undeveloped colonial policy. In this connection

the proclamation of 1763 and the Quebec act of 1774 take on a significance quite apart from their bearing on the impending war.

One of the most striking features of the work is its clear demonstration of the inherent weakness of the imperial policy of England, arising from lack of political perspective on the part of her leaders and from the uncertain tenure of the cabinet positions. While it is pointed out that neither the king nor the cabinet were lacking in insight into certain aspects of colonial needs, and that the theories of many of the ministers were excellent, and their plans well laid, yet again and again some court intrigue or mere personal jealousy among colleagues would intervene to bring everything to naught and postpone indefinitely the solution of pressing problems.

While Mr. Alvord has given us not a little that is absolutely new, undoubtedly his greatest service consists in his rearrangement along new and original lines of the material that has long been passing current in the field of western history. An excellent illustration of this is to be seen in the treatment of Pontiac's war, in which it is easy to note what has been added to Parkman's account of the same period. But more than this, the whole subject of British colonial policy and the winning of American independence is presented from a new angle, with a very considerable improvement in the point of view as a consequence. It is clear, also, that there is in this work a distinct contribution to genuine national history. We have not been so far entirely successful in writing history that is above sectional narrowness. Too many of our historians have been circumscribed by their environment or by their opportunities and have failed to catch the larger vision of America's unique experiment at nation making. In attempting the problem of the western frontier in its relation to English control, Mr. Alvord was fortunate enough at the outset to discover in his own state a mass of source material that helped to reveal to him the larger aspects of the history of that oldest culture point in the middle west, the Illinois country. From this vantage ground he has thus been able to estimate properly the national significance of that mounting tide of frontier population that by 1763 had already begun to break over the crest of the Alleghenies and to flood into the plains beyond. Through the conflicting claims of the Iroquois and the southern Indians in the Ohio valley he was able to include within the scope of his investigations the work of Sir William Johnson and his southern colleagues in the same department of service. Besides this there were the complex frontier problems created by the fur trade rivalries arising from the conflict of interests between the Hudson's Bay monopoly and the free traders from Montreal and Quebec, later combining into the Northwest and XY companies. While, therefore, he has not

exhausted the materials immediately at hand, Mr. Alvord has been able to draw to a focus a number of divergent lines of research so as to throw new and unexpected light on many obscure portions of our middle west history.

Two related fields now lie open to the student who is to follow up what has been gained by still further investigation. One of these lines of inquiry may be found in the Appalachian area, where since the beginning of the eighteenth century a famous group of pioneers and Indian fighters had been gradually mustering their numbers for an advance upon the fertile areas at the west. We know relatively little of the origins or of the nature of the migration into this plateau and mountain wilderness on our colonial frontier, or of the causes that so long postponed its advance into the Ohio valley. But the method of research presented in this work and the results that have been accomplished have gone far to clear the way for such a study. The second task that seemingly lies before the student of western history is bound up with the evolution of that early trading center and frontier post of St. Louis into the metropolis of later years. These chapters in our national history that seem to follow naturally on the appearance of the present work will in turn become the starting points for other and later studies that for the most part have hardly yet been projected.

Western historians are certainly under a considerable obligation to Mr. Alvord for his present contribution. The clear-cut and incisive manner in which he has handled a difficult subject marks his initial venture into an unexplored territory as a distinct advance in the field of national history.

O. G. LIBBY

Wisconsin losses in the civil war. A list of names of Wisconsin soldiers killed in action, mortally wounded or dying from other causes in the civil war, arranged according to organization, and also in a separate alphabetical list. Edited by Charles E. Estabrook; Duncan McGregor and Orlando Holway, associate commissioners. (Madison: Printed by the state, 1915. 343 p.)

This compilation is an addition to the body of information published by state and patriotic societies which, if accurately and exhaustively done, is valuable both to students of civil war military statistics, and to the officials of the war department and the pensions bureau in supplementing their records.

The list of losses is arranged according to organization, is grouped according to the cause within each regiment or battery, and gives the name, rank, and place and date of death in each case, as it is found in the report of adjutant general of Wisconsin for 1865, supplemented by